

# Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

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Start Something New

MINISTRY

**Week of Prayer  
for North  
American  
Missions**

March 1-8, 1998

**ANNIE ARMSTRONG  
EASTER OFFERING**

National Goal: \$42,000,000

## WHAT'S IN THE RECORD

NOBTS to move?



Post modern church



Letters to the editor



AAEO special emphasis



## Arizona missionary grateful for support

PARKER, Ariz. — Members of Parker First Southern and Big River churches gathered over fried catfish and assorted pot luck at a recreation area on the California side of the Colorado River, nestled in the shadow of Mohave Desert mountains.

Their purpose, in addition to fellowship, was to discuss ways the two churches could partner to reach unchurched seasonal migrants in the area's many recreational vehicle parks.

Tommy Thomas, their associational missionary who had helped coordinate the meeting last fall, led in a few songs with his guitar after dinner and laid out some of the possibilities.

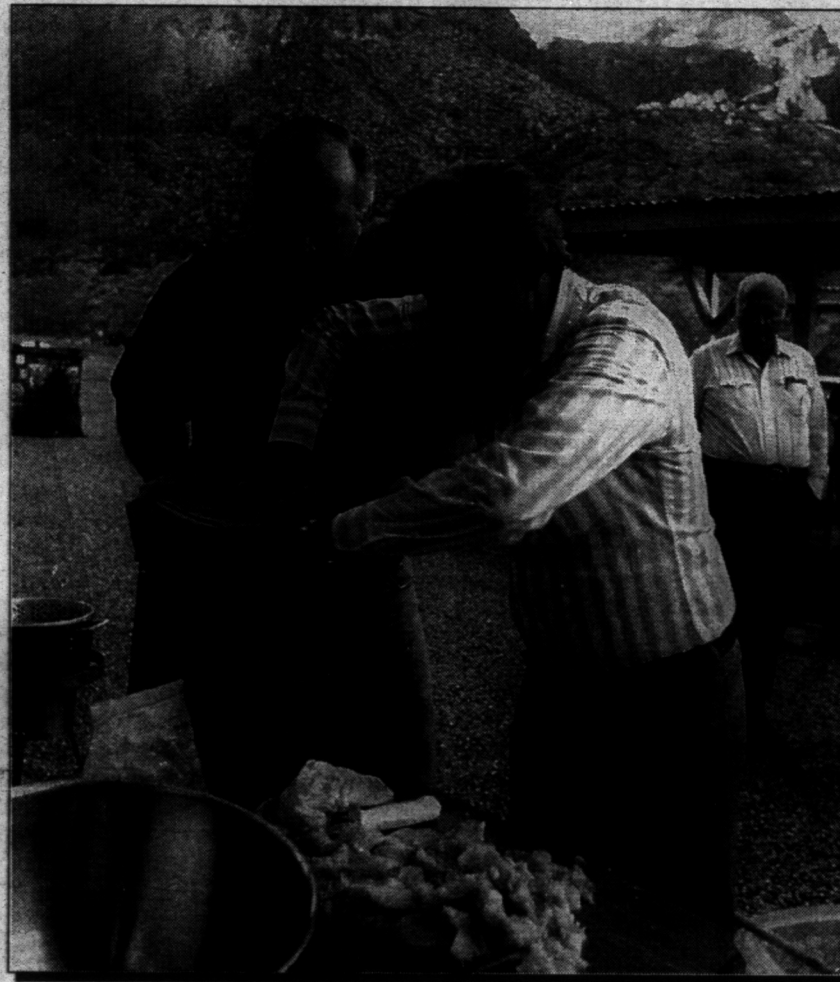
A "river pastor" might be successful in an area where previous efforts to start a traditional church had been unsuccessful.

Special events and concerts could provide opportunities for evangelism, and ministry teams from the churches could work to implement the efforts.

Other ideas arose as members became excited about the possibilities, and joint ministry came one step closer to fruition.

The meeting was typical of Thomas' work in helping coordinate missions efforts of the 18 churches in the River Valley Baptist Association, which includes more than 2,000 square miles of western Arizona from Lake Mead in the north to Quartzsite in the south.

It also was typical of the role Southern Baptists play in reaching our home continent with the gospel. Without the funding Thomas receives as a missionary of the North American Mission Board, River Valley Association



REACHING OUT — Tommy Thomas (right) and Jerry Kinman, pastor of First Church of Parker, Ariz., fry fish for members of associational churches at a recreation area near Parker Dam on the Colorado River. They gathered for fellowship and to discuss ways to reach "snowbirds," (seasonal migrants) who fill area vehicle parks. (Photo by James Dotson)

could probably support only a part-time director of missions with limited resources to start churches and coordinating innovative missions projects.

In fact, Big River and the other two new churches Thomas has led in starting over the past four years probably would not exist.

"There wouldn't be any way they could do the things they do (with a full-time missionary), because the area is so spread out and the missionary has to put in so many miles to work with the resort areas and start the new churches," said Thomas, one of the missionaries featured in the Week of

Prayer for North American Missions, March 1-8. The Week of Prayer is part of the Season of North American Missions.

The Season also includes the 1998 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering with a \$42 million national goal.

The association helped make possible a massive BeachReach effort last year on the beaches of Lake Havasu on the Colorado River, in which about 120 college students spent their spring break ministering to and sharing their faith with peers.

A key part of the job for Thomas and other directors of missions is lending support to pastors and their families, offering a listening ear or advice to those who may not feel comfortable sharing deep concerns with their own congregations.

For many, it is extreme culture shock as they encounter the isolation of living in small towns in the desert, in an environment where grass lawns are a luxury and the landscape is often an endless brown.

They also face an environment common to many new work areas outside the Bible belt: Christians are relatively scarce here, and Southern Baptists are even more scarce.

For missionaries like Tommy Thomas, that is all part of the challenge.

"You've got to really work hard to get anything done here," he pointed out.

"I guess it's challenging everywhere, but certainly in this area the church is just not the center of the community. — and you really have to find ways to relate to people and meet their needs," Thomas said.

## North Korea to receive BWA help

Food, seeds, and medicine will go to North Korea following a five-day visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) — North Korea — by a team headed by Paul Montacute, director of Baptist World Aid (BWAid) of the Baptist World Alliance (BWA).

At one food distribution point, Montacute was shown how the daily ration for an adult had been reduced from 700 to 200 grams of maize. Visiting two kindergartens, the BWA team saw the meager rations being available to the children.

The economic difficulties within the country mean that a shortage of oil leads to lack of power and heat, again putting the economy under tremendous strain. With intense cold weather made worse by the lack of heating, children are not only hungry and malnourished but suffering from preventable diseases.

"I hope that individuals, churches, and conventions/unions will prayerfully consider how they can offer the love of Christ to the people of the DPRK through these BWAid projects," said Montacute.

## Looking back

10 years ago

Jimmy Draper and Bailey Smith, former presidents of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and current SBC president Adrian Rogers, release a statement of beliefs to clarify "what makes our hearts beat, who we are and what we really, really want for the SBC."

25 years ago

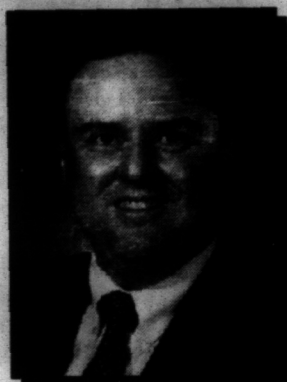
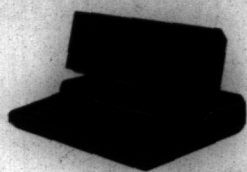
The Mississippi Baptist Student Union appoints 58 students to serve as 1978 student summer missionaries. Appointed to eight foreign countries and 22 states, the students will work jobs ranging from nursing in India to inner-city work in New York City.

50 years ago

SBC statistician Porter Routh announces Southern Baptist churches in 1947 reported more baptisms; enrolled more people in Sunday School, Training Union, Women's Missionary Societies, and Brotherhood; and gave more money to all causes than at any other time in convention history. There are 26,764 churches with 6,270,819 members.



## EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK



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# The 'Ellen Opportunity,' Part Two

**A**pparently, it's all over but the shout-  
ing — and there will be plenty of that.  
Local affiliates of the ABC television  
network are being quietly told that the sit-  
com "Ellen" will not be in the lineup when  
the network's fall schedule is announced.

"Ellen," you will recall, revolves around  
lead character Ellen DeGeneres, a former  
standup comedienne in real life. You will  
further recall that the real-life Ellen and the  
sitcom Ellen both came out of the closet last  
April to jointly announce their lesbianism  
and renounce the quaint moral codes that  
oppressed them for so long.

The April 30 coming-out episode  
was hailed as brave and daring. Oprah  
Winfrey made a cameo  
appearance, as did Hollywood stars  
Laura Dern ("Jurassic Park"), Demi  
Moore ("Striptease"), Billy Bob  
Thornton ("Sling Blade"), and les-  
bian performers Melissa Ethridge  
and k.d. lang.

Michael Eisner, head of The  
Disney Corporation — owner of  
ABC — supported the show and  
explained that the purpose of  
"Ellen" was to push homosexual  
themes to the limit.

Push they did. One recent  
episode featured the series star  
leading her newfound lesbian love  
to their bedroom, dropping flower  
petals on the floor as she repeated, "She  
loves me, she loves me not..."

Another episode repeatedly referred to  
"Straight Town," an apparent disparaging  
reference to the section of the city occupied  
by heterosexual families. In last week's  
episode, Ellen's male cousin sought her  
counsel as he agonized over whether to  
admit that he actually liked women, as if  
that was the aberration.

An April 24, 1997 editorial in this space  
stated, "As the broadcast networks contin-  
ue to lose viewers by the millions to other

forms of entertainment  
and amusement, they  
seem oblivious to the  
fact that the majority of  
Americans don't wish  
to be fed a steady diet of  
perversion."

Well, "Ellen" has been  
sinking like a rock in the  
ratings since that com-  
ing-out episode. In the  
lingo of the TV business,  
the show wasn't able to  
"hold the audience" that  
tuned in for that one  
highly-promoted  
episode.

You can be sure homo-  
sexual rights activists  
aren't going to sit still for  
this cancellation. Even  
though "Ellen" has  
proven to be a simple  
market failure, there's  
going to be plenty of  
shouting and accusations  
and recriminations about  
unfairness and homo-  
phobia and persecution.

You can also be sure  
Christians will be tar-  
geted for criticism.

That's where our sec-  
ond "Ellen" opportuni-  
ty will be found to show  
lost people the heart of  
Christ.

Our first opportunity arose with the high  
profile coming-out episode, which many  
Christians used not to harangue homosexu-  
als but as an opening to share their person-  
al, one-on-one witness with people who  
had never heard the Good News.

That is our job, isn't it (Matt. 28:18-20)?  
As the rhetoric heats up, don't get side-  
tracked by political issues and fruitless

"WHAT KEEPS ME GOING  
FROM DAY TO DAY IS MY  
FAITH, THE LOVE OF MY  
FAMILY, AND THERE ARE  
STILL SOME ANDY GRIFFITH  
RERUNS I HAVEN'T  
SEEN!"



debates. Talk is cheap; put your witness  
where your mouth is and lead some people  
to Christ.

This is our second chance to seize the  
"Ellen Opportunity." There is no time for  
hesitation. We may naturally wonder if we  
are making a difference in this world, but  
for the followers of Christ there is no doubt  
about our impact in the next world.

## PRESIDENT'S JOURNAL:

### Christians: Barkers or hunters?

By Dean Register, president  
Mississippi Baptist Convention



**I**f you conducted a nation-  
wide survey and asked  
respondents to name a "boring  
place" you might be surprised  
that many people would say  
"church."

That's regrettable. Jesus did  
not establish his church as a  
bastion of boredom. He never  
instructed his followers to feed  
at the table of monotony and  
recline in the pew of apathy.

Several years ago during a  
vacation I took my family to  
worship at a church in a resort  
area. We entered the door expect-  
ing an uplifting and inspiring  
experience of worship. We left an  
hour later feeling weary and dis-  
couraged. My eight-year-old son  
asked, "Dad, why was every-  
body so sad in there?"

What could I say? No answer  
can explain why Christian peo-  
ple behave as if the tomb is still  
occupied. We worship a risen,  
reigning, and resplendent  
Savior. Therefore, church  
should be optimistic and joyful,  
not gloomy and oppressive.

John R. Stott, once said,  
"Sometimes when I attend a  
church service, I really think I've  
come to a funeral by mistake.  
Everybody is dressed in black.  
Nobody laughs and nobody  
smiles. The atmosphere is dis-  
mal. If only I could overcome  
my Anglo-Saxon reserve, I  
would shout out in the middle

of such a service, 'Cheer-Up!  
Christianity is a joyful religion.'"

At the heart of the problem is a  
problem of the heart. Jesus is  
looking for men and women who  
will joyfully live his message and  
courageously obey his mandate. I  
learned this truth through an  
unexpected hunting parable.

My Uncle Clarence gave new  
meaning to the word "unique."  
His Cherokee features of  
straight, black hair and high  
cheek bones stood out against a  
backdrop of southern farmers  
and fair-skinned small-town  
businessmen.

He was an avid hunter.  
Sometimes he would work all  
day as a mechanic and coon  
hunt all night.

He had six or seven hound  
dogs that he called Spot, Reb,  
Dolly, and a few other things I  
can't mention in this article. He  
loved his dogs, and he expected

obedience. The way he figured  
it, if he was going to invest his  
time, money, and sweat in the  
canine corps, the main thing he  
wanted in return was obedience.

One cool, autumn night his  
dogs picked up the trail of a  
coon. Through the briars and  
across a creek they raced in  
pursuit — all of them, that is,  
except for Reb, who decided he  
would rather bark than hunt.

Reb made lots of noise. He  
sounded as if he was snapping  
at the heels of a big raccoon, but  
in reality he was only 30-40  
yards away from Clarence, who  
was warming himself by a fire.

My uncle rarely showed his  
emotions. I seldom remember  
him ever getting angry. Just a  
Cherokee trait, I guess, but on  
that night, at that moment, the  
fire couldn't have been any hot-  
ter than Uncle Clarence.

Slowly he raised his double-

barrel shotgun at Reb's rear. He  
pulled the hammer back. He put  
his finger on the trigger and  
said, "Dog, either you better  
hunt or you better quit barking."

I don't know if it was the  
grave tone of my uncle's voice  
or the sound of the hammer  
click on that old blue steel  
Remington, but Reb heard the  
message. In a flash he hit the  
trail to hunt again.

Through the years that experi-  
ence has become a parable to me.  
The world is full of "barkers."

Sometimes barkers wander  
into churches. They howl and  
make lots of noise, but they  
don't do the one thing God  
expects. They don't obey him!

They don't follow the  
instructions of their Master,  
and he is not fooled. They pre-  
fer to yelp about trivial matters  
while the heart of God breaks  
over a lost and dying world.

So I continue to pray: "Father,  
may I ever be a hunter for the  
souls of men and women.  
Compel me into the thickets of a  
culture that flees from you and  
empower me to obey your  
slightest whisper."

"Forgive me for staying  
around the fire of comfort when  
you commissioned me to go and  
find the lost. And, O Lord, keep  
me from merely barking. Amen!"

Register is pastor of Temple  
Church, Hattiesburg.



# Sunday School lesson writers named for new quarter

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

New writers have been named for The Baptist Record's weekly Sunday School lessons page, beginning with the March 1 lesson.

Jim Burnett, pastor of Raymond Road Church in Jackson, will write the Life and Work series; Grace Graham of Long Beach will write the Family Bible series; and Harold Simmons, pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada, will write the Explore the Bible series.

They will each write lessons for the March, April, and May quarter.

Burnett has been pastor of Raymond Road Church for a little over a year.

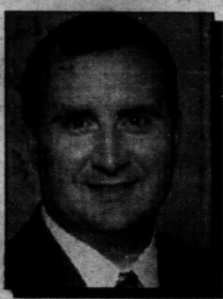
He is a native of Brandon and a graduate of the University of Southern Mississippi with a degree in Business Administration, and New

Orleans Seminary with a Master of Divinity degree.

Burnett is married to the former Kim Boutwell of Long Beach. They have three children: Brandon, seven; Nathan, four; and Emily, one.

Graham is the Director of Childhood Education Ministries at First Church, Gulfport.

She is a graduate of Mississippi University for Women and received her Masters of Arts degree in Christian



Burnett



Graham

Education from New Orleans Seminary.

She is a member of the Gulf Coast ACT Team and an experienced conference leader.

For 21 years, Simmons served as a missionary under the Chaplain's Commission of the Southern Baptist Home Mission Board with the United States Air Force.

The Home Mission Board is now known as the North American Mission Board, and is still located in Atlanta.

A native of Tennessee, he is a graduate of Union University in Jackson, Tenn., and New Orleans Seminary.

He has done additional



Simmons

study through numerous schools sponsored by the U.S. Air Force at Drew University, Southern Methodist University, and the Air University at Maxwell Air Force Base.

He and his wife, the former Shirely Hildreth, have four adult children.

Since retirement from the U.S. Air Force in 1990, Simmons has pastored McLean Church, Memphis, and is currently interim pastor at Hebron Church, Grenada.

The Baptist Record recruits three new Sunday School writers for each upcoming quarter of the church year.



THE  
SECOND  
FRONT PAGE

**Record**

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## NOBTS trustees to tackle possible move

NEW ORLEANS (BP) — One of the most pivotal deliberations in the history of New Orleans Seminary (NOBTS) will take place March 10-11 during the annual spring meeting of the NOBTS board of trustees.

Members will hear and vote on the recommendation from the "Vision New Orleans" committee as to whether the seminary should move or remain on the current property.

NOBTS president Chuck Kelley established the ad hoc committee in March 1996, his first trustee meeting as seminary president, in an effort to "attack the issue of relocation," he said. Trustees elected him president Feb. 23, 1996.

Initial discussions on moving or staying began about two years before Kelley's elec-

tion, during the presidential term of Landrum Leavell, who retired in December 1995. At the time, the seminary recently had been given a sizeable piece of property outside New Orleans and local groups were considering purchase of the existing campus.

"Although we were not planning to move, we did not have the luxury of avoiding that question. We needed to put the seminary in a position to be able to make the best decision when the time would come, whenever that may be," Kelley said.

The committee, chaired by trustee Davis Cooper, pastor of University Hills Church in Denver, was instructed by the board to take up to two years to study whether it

would be feasible to remain at the present location on Gentilly Boulevard.

"I did not want the seminary to have to face a single choice," when the time came to have to make a choice, Kelley said. "I wanted us to be prepared and informed, ahead of time."

"There was a feeling (in 1996) that we were being forced to move," Cooper said, in reference to offers from local groups, as well as reports of termite damage and safety issues on the campus.

"No one had ever investigated all of the factors," he said. "We needed to begin dealing with hard evidence, not feelings."

The Vision New Orleans committee is composed of a cross-section of the seminary family, Cooper said: six trustees, four faculty members, two Foundation Board members, and one student.

"Committee members also represent different perspectives — ministry and business — from different parts of the country, some without seminary degrees, some who lived on campus as seminary students," Cooper said.

"Through our study and research," he said, "there has been a real desire to see whatever needed to be done, done."

Committee members have been organized in three workgroups:

- ◆ The first group surveyed seminary constituents: faculty, staff, current main campus students, current extension center students, spouses of students, prospective students, and alumni.

- ◆ The second group studied the feasibility and costs of moving versus staying.

- ◆ The third group surveyed community demographics and the suitability of the neighborhood for a seminary.

The committee has completed its work on time, Kelley said, and will make its recommendation to the trustees' regularly scheduled March meeting.

A decision on the recommendation is expected to follow on the same day.

## Mississippi WMU attends training



Mississippi Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) leaders attending the first Training Effective Leaders Feb. 12-14 at WMU national headquarters in Birmingham include (standing, from left) Sandra Nobles of Clinton, Cynthia Mabry of Jackson, Betty Davis of McComb, Juanita Schilling of McComb, Margaret Lay of Morton, Anita Malley of Flora - Miss. WMU GA/Mission Friends consultant, Heather Booth of Amory, Deborah Gilbert of Saucier, (seated, from left) Rebecca Williams of Gautier - Miss. WMU president, Marjean Patterson of Clinton - Miss. WMU executive director, and Tammy Anderson of Clinton - Miss. WMU Acteens consultant. Nearly 350 WMU leaders from 38 states participated in the national component of the new WMU training plan. (WMU photo by Teresa Dickens)

New phones  
going in at  
Baptist Bldg.

Installation has begun on a new computerized telephone system for Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) offices in the Baptist Building. Paul Pinson, MBCB director of accounting and personnel services, reported that brief service interruptions may occur over the next several days until the system installation is completed.





# Sweet offers keys to post-modern dilemma

By Carl M. White  
Associate Editor

Final in a series

"There is no more exciting life than being a disciple of Christ. It is full of risk and adventure. Yet, our churches have become safety zones for risk-free living. How did we get in this dilemma?"

That is the question raised by Leonard I. Sweet, dean of the Theology School of Drew University. He spoke Feb. 10 in Clinton at the Mississippi College (MC) Institute for Christian Leadership, a program to provide academic and practical training for pastors, evangelist, staff persons, and lay leaders.

In response to his query, Sweet pointed to what he called "The Real Lord's Prayer" found in John, chapter 17. Here, Sweet indicated, is a strategy for Christian ministry in the post-modern world.

Sweet said Jesus prayed, "... keep them in the world, don't let them be of it, but don't take them out of it, either."

"The modern church capitulated to the modern culture. We became 'of it,'" Sweet contended.

Using one of the symbols of revival, Sweet pointed out the showers of blessings have fallen from heaven in the past — with Baptists and Methodists developing plumbing systems to collect the water from heaven and plumb it to those who most needed it.

"Now, our plumbing is clogged," he said.

In reference to his own United Methodist denomination, Sweet said, "Our plumbing is so clogged and old, only a trickle is getting through. These trickles are no longer pure, fresh water, but filtered down."

"We are using the aqueduct of our ancestors, and the water has turned bitter. Any water left stagnant long enough turns bitter, even heavenly water."

The same could be true of the Baptist plumbing, he indicated.



Sweet

Sweet suggested the best response begins with a rich spiritual heritage.

"Tradition is good; traditionalism is bad," he said. Sweet defined tradition as the living faith of the dead, and traditionalism as the dead faith of the living.

"Ancient, living faith is the key to contemporary, living faith. The key is continuity. Live out of the past into the future, not in the past out of the future," he stressed.

In order to conduct effective ministry in the postmodern world, Sweet suggested the church make a number of transitions.

"We are talking about transitions from one way of moving and thinking into other ways, and it will not be easy."

One transition is from "ministry by representation to ministry by participation."

The church that ministers in the post-modern world must be what Sweet calls "EPIC" — Experiential, Participatory, Interactive Church.

"The biggest lie being told today is that the electronic culture creates passive people. No! It creates interactive people," Sweet said.

In postmodern culture, people want to be involved, to interact and participate, and not sit, listen, and soak up what others say and do, he indicated.

As an example, Sweet pointed to the

death of Princess Diana. "At her funeral, there was a first at Westminster Abbey. After Elton John's song, there was applause for the first time ever in that church. It did not start inside the church; it started outside and came in. Westminster Abbey could no longer sit and soak up worship anymore."

"People demanded the opportunity to participate. That is why they wanted to applaud. We don't even remember a word the priest said. Other voices besides the official voice of the church spoke louder that day, and they were heard while the voice of the priest was forgotten," he said.

Sweet saw the thousands of letters, visits to web sites, flowers, and people lined up for hours on end to sign the register, as the cry of a postmodern population asking to be involved.

"EPIC will abolish the distinction between clergy and the laity. The one doctrine of the Protestant Reformation never fully implemented in the church is the priesthood of the believer."

"In EPIC, there will be no call to ministry, because all are called to the ministry. When Moses was called by God at the burning bush, he didn't say, 'Yes Lord, this fits my spiritual gifts.' Moses said, 'I don't have the gifts for this!' God's response was, 'So what! Obey me.'"

"There are no 'volunteers' in the church. The church has ministers and ministries. Don't hire someone to do ministry for you. That's representation. All should do ministry; all are ministers. That is participation."

Sweet suggested that as Christians survey the postmodern world, they should understand that "... if it is of Jesus, go there and do likewise. If it is not of Jesus, go there and do otherwise."

The Institute for Christian Leadership is directed by Harold T. Bryson, MC professor of Christian Studies and Philosophy.

For more information about the Institute, contact Bryson, at MC, Box 4013, Clinton, MS 39058-4013. Telephone: (601) 925-3297.

For information on Sweet and his ministry, visit his world-wide-web site at [leonardsweet.com](http://leonardsweet.com).

## The Institute for Christian Leadership

### Accepting the challenge



The presidents of the three Baptist-affiliated colleges in Mississippi recently received the schools' portions of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board challenge budget for 1997. The school portions amounted to 50% of the challenge budget, or \$970,540, with the remaining 50% dedicated to missions. Present at the Mississippi Baptist Education Commission meeting at which the funds were distributed were (from left) Howell W. Todd, president of Mississippi College (MC) in Clinton; E. Harold Fisher, president of Blue Mountain College in Blue Mountain; Rex Yancey, pastor of First Church, Pascagoula and chairman of the Education Commission; Larry Kennedy, acting president of William Carey College in Hattiesburg; and Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. (MC photo by Jesse Worley)

### Celebrate the Years Senior Adult Celebrations 1998

Coming this Autumn!  
Lancaster, Pennsylvania  
Williamsburg, Virginia  
Pigeon Forge, Tennessee

#### \*Guests include:

- Willard Scott
- Art Linkletter
- Jerry Clower
- Kurt Kaiser
- George Beverly Shea

...and many others



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association

\* All guests do not appear at every conference.

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## JOIN BOOK LINK

Editor:

At the November, 1997 meeting of Mississippi Baptist Convention/Lay Missions Conference, I was elected president of the Mississippi Baptist Educators, an arm of the National Fellowship of Baptist Educators.

The "mission" of the National Fellowship of Baptist Educators and Mississippi Baptist Educators is to promote Christian educators at home and abroad through Book Link.

Since 1988, Book Link's goal has been to get surplus Christian

books, study tools, and Bibles into empty hands of Southern Baptist Convention missionaries, their students, and national pastors in developing countries — to get good life-changing books off of dusty shelves and into the hands of Christian servants who have none.

Book Link has shipped 20 plus tons of books to 60 or more countries and several states since 1988. We need your help.

If you are a retired teacher or educator, why not join us in promoting Book Link? There are no dues; we need interested people who are willing to give a

small contribution for postage, etc., to urge friends to give good theological books, study course books, Bibles, etc., for this use.

Mississippi College has given us space for the books where they can be sorted, boxed, and shipped. Also, we have men who volunteer to do this time-consuming and sometimes dusty, dirty task.

If you are interested in becoming a part of this group, please contact me at (228) 896-1275, or Hal Buchanan, 2121 Briar Ridge Road, Tupelo, MS, 38801. Telephone (601) 842-4309.

We need you; God needs

you! Our missionaries around the world need books. Join us!

Jean Allgood  
Gulfport

## SEARCHING FOR PASTOR

Editor:

I am chairman of Pastor Search Committee Abingdon Baptist Church, Abingdon, Va.

If you know of (a pastor) who may be considering a move, please have them send their resume to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 711, Abingdon, Va. 24212.

Irene Meade, chairman  
Pastor Search Committee

## COMMENDS DATE CHANGE

Editor:

The Mississippi Baptist Bivocational Ministry Council met recently and passed a resolution commending the Evangelism Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board for changing the dates of the state evangelism conference to the week including the Dr. Martin Luther King Holiday.

The Council understands that this gesture was made in an effort to involve more bivocational ministers in the evangelism conference, without their having to miss work. Perhaps as many as 50% of bivocational ministers are in teaching or other forms of government service.

Joe Young, pastor  
Calvary Chapel of Parchman  
Parchman

## THANKS FOR RECORD

Editor:

I am an inmate at the Batesville Detention Center. After reading The Baptist Record I had to write and compliment you and your staff for bringing such wonderful hope into my life. I had no idea how out of touch I had become with the Word of God.

We receive The Baptist Record through William E. Trusty and North Batesville Church.

God has made me a born again Christian with the help of the Baptist Record and the church. Debbie Sills has had a real impact on my day to day life. She is a gift from God and her (Sunday School) lessons are really helpful to me.

I just wanted to let you know The Baptist Record is working.  
Name withheld



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

*Unsigned letters will not be printed.  
No multi-copy or form letters will be used.*

*Each correspondent must include an address and telephone number for verification. In special instances, name may be withheld at writer's request and editor's discretion.*

*Please include the name of cooperating Mississippi Baptist church where correspondent is a member. (Mississippi Baptists' letters will receive priority when space is limited.)*

*Letters must be limited to 250 words. All correspondence is subject to editing.*

*Correspondents should refrain from personal attacks. The opinions expressed in letters to the editor do not necessarily reflect the views of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board.*

*No more than one letter from any individual will be printed during a three-month period.*

*When in the judgement of the editor a given issue has received sufficient attention, correspondence dealing with it will no longer be published and a notice will be printed to that effect.*

# Staying Well

## Vaccinations for Children: A Crucial Concern

Children are our most important treasures, yet tragically they often suffer due to illnesses that are preventable. The health of many children could be dramatically improved through a few simple measures. One of the most effective is an immunization program.

"Before they're two years old, children need immunizations to prevent ten diseases," said Robert Hannemann, MD, FAAP, president of the American Association of Pediatrics. "In some cases, this requires more than one dose of vaccine, but several immunizations can often be given at one visit. We recommend parents check with their pediatrician or health department to see what is needed for their child."

Here is a partial list of immunizations every child needs.

- MMR to protect against measles, mumps and rubella (German measles)
- Polio vaccine (OPV or IPV) to protect against polio
- DTP or DTaP to protect against diphtheria, tetanus (lockjaw) and pertussis (whooping cough)
- Hib vaccines to protect infants against Haemophilus influenzae type b (a major cause of spinal meningitis)
- Vaccine to protect against Hepatitis-B, which causes liver disease

This year, Baptist began working with the Mississippi State Department of Health in a special program to immunize sixth-graders against Hepatitis-B. Studies have shown that the incidence of Hepatitis-B can be slowed if immunizations are given before age 12. In pilot programs in Jackson, Brandon and Pearl, Baptist volunteers have recently given immunizations to several hundred sixth-graders. These children have learned that a few seconds of discomfort can lead to a lifetime of prevention.

If you're a parent of young children, please have your child immunized. It's a small thing you can do that may affect your child's health for a lifetime. To find out more, or to get a free immunization schedule for your child, call the Baptist Healthcare Line at 1-800-948-6262.

## Understanding the Benefits of Children's Immunization

Call 1-800-948-6262 for more information.

**Baptist**  
HEALTH SYSTEMS

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## Deadlines

The deadline for news items is one calendar week prior to requested publication date. For example, a news item to be published in the issue dated March 20 must be received no later than March 13.

The deadline for advertising insertions is two calendar weeks prior to requested publication date. For example, an ad to be published in the issue dated March 27 must be received no later than March 13.

For more information, contact The Baptist Record at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.



# 1998 Annie Armstrong

## Viet pastor finding way back to meaningful ministry

SURREY, British Columbia — David Nguyen knows the struggles of Vietnamese refugees. He's been there, having been a pastor in Vietnam who faced persecution before emigrating to

ministry. After Bible school he served a year as pastor before communist forces from the North reached the area, and as a Christian minister he was put in prison for seven months.

It was only three months after his release that Nguyen was forced to serve in the now-communist military. But just before a planned invasion of neighboring Laos, he deserted and hid on his father's farm for a year before leaving the country. Even then, his trials persisted as the overcrowded boat was robbed and damaged by pirates, and Nguyen and fellow refugees barely made it to Thailand.

"When we came to the refugee camp, we had nothing in our pockets. But when we settled there the Lord gave us peace, and we waited for a chance to move to another country," he said.

Nguyen eventually was sponsored as a refugee by a Mennonite congregation in Edmonton, Alberta, where he became active in a local Baptist church as a layman. He worked in a variety of jobs, including appliance repair, and eventually was able to save enough money for his

family in Vietnam to join him. It was also in Edmonton that he met his wife, Truc. But the years of turmoil, many of which he did not even have access to a Bible, had drawn him away from his calling.

"I never thought about coming back to serve God ... but one year God used somebody to remind me about God's call," Nguyen said. "He said, your life was offered to God before. Why did you stop?"

The reminder sunk in, and in 1993 Nguyen returned to seminary in Langley, British Columbia, another suburb of Vancouver. He graduated, and in March of 1996 the opportunity arose to start the mission in Surrey — the first Baptist Vietnamese mission in Canada.

Vancouver is a fitting location for such an effort, a city that celebrates its internationalism. Asian refugees and other immigrants are common, and the largest Southern Baptist church is actually a Chinese

congregation. Many of the immigrants — particularly from Hong Kong — have acquired great wealth. Many of the Vietnamese, however, face the emotional and financial stresses of starting over in a foreign culture.

Nguyen said he has learned the way to reach the 10,000 Vietnamese people in Surrey is often through helping meet their practical needs: the assistance in dealing with government officials, help in finding a job, or English-as-a-second-language classes offered through the Capilano Baptist Association.

It is only then that they become open to realizing their most important need.

Progress in the new work sometimes seems slow, in part because the transient nature of many of the Vietnamese makes it difficult to keep members.

Nguyen is requesting prayer that God would move, with the help of sponsoring churches and associations, to bring about more missions such as his

targeting the Vietnamese in Canada.

Finding sponsors for mission congregations is especially difficult in Canada because of the small number of strong Southern Baptist churches.

Royal Heights, which averages about 250 in attendance on Sundays, is one of the largest and strongest in the association and sponsors several language missions.

Nguyen also asks that Southern Baptists pray specifically for God's Grace church, that it would become stronger — both in membership and financially — so that more people might be reached through its ministry.

"The one thing that's encouraged me the most is the word by the Apostle Paul," Nguyen said, referring to his own struggles both in Vietnam and in building a mission church.

"He was saying that the sufferings we have now are nothing compared to the great glory that will be given to us when Jesus Christ comes back."



Nguyen

Canada in 1979. The experience was enough to keep him out of the ministry for many years, even after he found a new home in Canada.

God wasn't finished with him. Today, Nguyen is pastor of God's Grace Vietnamese Baptist Church in suburban Vancouver, where he works daily to help his own people overcome their circumstances and ultimately come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.

"To the Vietnamese people who come here, Canada is a foreign land," he said. "They face difficulties with the language, jobs, family problems. So my ministry is to lead them to study English ... and to help them in this new life. ... But most of all I believe they need to know the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the real peace, the real happiness they need in their life."

Nguyen, and his wife, Truc, are among the North American Mission Board missionaries featured in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 1-8. The Week of Prayer is part of the Season of North American Missions. The Season also includes the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering with a national goal for 1998 of \$42 million.

It was 1972 when Nguyen, raised in a Christian home in Vietnam, made a profession of faith in Christ and shortly thereafter acknowledged a call to the

## Disabled Florida cowboy discovers ministry in sport he still loves

HAINES CITY, Fla. — Ranching and rodeos were Randy Johnson's life until he broke his neck in a swimming accident at age 21. With his spinal cord severed at the fifth vertebra, "I was not expected to live," let alone return to bull and bronco riding or to earning his living as a working ranch cowboy. God had a plan for Randy's life that would take him back to the rodeo arena — not as a competitor, but as a minister.

As a Mission Service Corps volunteer with the North American Mission Board, Randy now serves as chaplain to the Florida High School Rodeo Association and the Florida Junior Rodeo Association. He is among the missionaries featured in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 1-8.

The accident left Randy a paraplegic, but the extent of his recovery exceeded doctors' expectations. Within a year, he had regained enough use of his arms to propel his own wheelchair. He eventually was able to drive. In the aftermath of the accident, when he could begin to think about something besides just surviving, Randy recommitted his life to Christ.

Randy had disassociated himself with the cowboy and ranching life after his accident. He had been away 16 years when, in 1990, he read a magazine article about the Fellowship of Christian Cowboys.

Inspired by the article, he contacted the Silver Spurs pro rodeo in Kissimmee, Fla., and asked if anyone was doing "cowboy church" for the contestants. If not, he said, he would volunteer. Rodeo officials agreed, and

Randy began leading an informal worship service at the rodeo grounds on Sunday morning.

He soon was approached by Rana Wallace of Eustis, Fla., a member of the High School Rodeo Association. She asked if he would be willing to lead "cowboy church" at the high school rodeos. He agreed.

As he ministers with the young rodeo contestants, both in "cowboy church" and in one-on-one contact, Randy said he tries to encourage them to study the Bible and to stand for Christian values in a world that's influencing them to be

anything but Christian. Win or lose, he tries to emphasize to each one that "in God's sight, you're unique and special."





# Strong Easter Offering

FOR NORTH AMERICAN MISSIONS

## Pastor seeks to bring sense of community to inner city

WATERBURY, Ct. — If you're looking for Maner Tyson on Friday nights, you won't find him at home. Instead, he's out on the streets of Waterbury, Conn., looking for prostitutes and drug dealers. But Tyson isn't a pusher, a pimp nor a police officer. He's the pastor of Waterbury Baptist Ministries, a church and Baptist Center in the inner city.

Tyson, who refers to himself as a minister who is trained in social work, is among the missionaries featured in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 1-8. The Week of Prayer is part of the Season of North American Missions. The Season also includes the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering with a national goal for 1998 of \$42 million.

At least once a week, Tyson walks through the Willow Plaza neighborhood around the ministry center. Once, Waterbury's wealthy lived here in freshly painted houses and worked in factories that made Waterbury the Brass Capital of the World.

Now, some residents have renamed Waterbury the Welfare Capital of the World. Willow Plaza looks like a poor community. But it's really just poor. "There's no community," said Tyson. "People reside here, they don't live here."

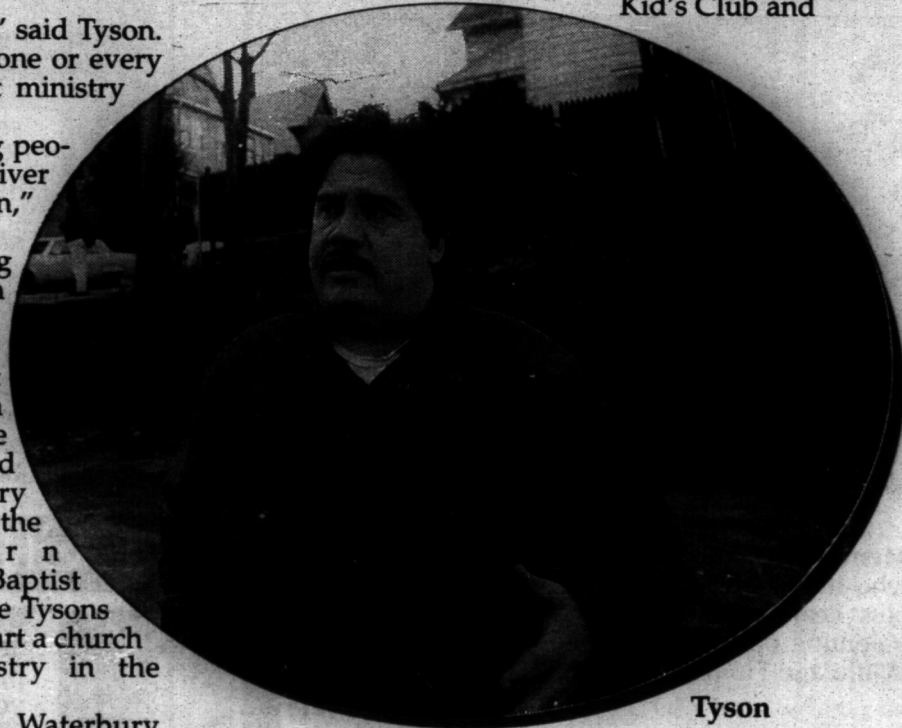
"There is an art to inner city ministry," said Tyson. "It's not a science. You don't treat everyone or every problem the same." Tyson believes that ministry must go beyond the occasional rescue.

"Sometimes you've got to stop pulling people out of the river long enough to go upriver and find out why they keep falling in," Tyson said.

"Only by being in the community long enough do you realize how to deal with the people there."

Tyson and his wife, Rhonie Black-Tyson, are graduates of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. In 1991, while

the Center's ministries have grown beyond a full Sunday and Wednesday evening schedule. The Center also offers a tutoring program for children and youth, art classes, J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) youth Bible study, Kid's Club and



Tyson

## Volunteers seen as key to success for Houston mission centers

HOUSTON, Texas — Participants in a national summit on volunteerism last year proclaimed that all Americans — regardless of age or other barriers — have a responsibility to each other to give of their time for causes they believe in.

The widely reported message was nothing new to Dorcas and Emerson Byrd, administrators of Baptist Mission Centers, which consist of three Baptist centers in Houston, Texas.

"Ninety percent of all the work through Baptist Mission Centers is done by volunteers," said Dorcas.

"We have approximately 60 groups from across the United States that visit us every year. We also use Mission Service Corps volunteers, summer missionaries, semester missionaries and local church members."

The Byrds are featured missionaries in this year's Week of Prayer for North American Missionaries, March 1-8. Dorcas has been a missionary of the North American Mission Board since 1992, and Emerson began working in the Centers in January of last year.

Although the Baptist Centers in Houston are widely known among Southern Baptists for their effectiveness, they minister in a community of overwhelming needs. Immigrants from Central America and Mexico arrive with nothing. Through the Centers they not only find clothing and food, but English and citizenship classes and medical help.

The Byrds understand that these programs only scratch the surface of a much deeper problem. "We have to lead them to a personal relationship with Jesus," said Dorcas, "so that they can begin to make the right choices about their lives. That's what a Christian does."

As for the countless volunteers who make the ministries of the Baptist Mission Centers possible, "they're my family, too," said Dorcas.

"I hope that whenever anyone prays for Emerson and me, they pray for the whole team," said Dorcas. "Our work here is not just up to the person whose name is on the prayer calendar."



Abigail (left) and Dorcas Byrd

1991, while Maner worked as a ministry consultant for the Western Connecticut Baptist Association, the Tysons felt called to start a church through ministry in the inner city.

A study of Waterbury highlighted three opportunities for ministry: drugs, prostitution, and a lack of activities for children.

The Tysons found an abandoned park on West Grove Street. With the help of volunteers, they cleaned it up and began a Backyard Bible Club. Tyson told residents he planned to start a church in January of 1992.

"I was worried," he said. "I had never been a pastor." He took some personal advice from prayer and spiritual awakening leader Henry Blackaby.

"God is already there," Blackaby told him. "Walk the streets and find what he is doing and get involved."

The Tysons rented a former dance hall and gay bar on Main Street to use as a ministry center and church. One adult came to the first worship service, the rest were children.

It was six months before the first child accepted Christ, nine months for the first adult.

Maner was not discouraged. "You've got to believe in what God can do," he said. "When only two people show up, you've got to believe in the vision."

Over the past six years,

Operation Nicodemus (or Nick At Night).

"Nick At Night began one Christmas Eve two or three years ago," said Tyson. "We had a candlelight service and 75 people came."

"I was real excited driving home when I came to a stop at an intersection not far from the center."

At the intersection where Tyson waited for the light to change was another storefront church. Inside, boys and girls were performing a Christmas pageant complete with shepherds and angels.

"They were at the part where the angels bring tidings of great joy," said Tyson.

"I noticed a shadow across the street. There in the dark was a prostitute, just watching everything going on inside the church."

"That's when I realized that Waterbury has a day city and a night city."

The center also serves as a laboratory for hands-on mission work. Waterbury Baptist Ministries has benefited from hundreds of volunteers from around the world.

"It's dangerous to come up here," said Tyson, "because your life is going to change."

As each missions team leaves the center to go home, they pass a sign posted by the ministry center door.

It encourages them to remember the needs of Waterbury and to get involved in local missions action.

Because, the sign and Tyson say, "There's a little Waterbury in every community."



**ANNIE ARMSTRONG  
EASTER OFFERING**  
**National Goal:**  
**\$42 million**





**First Church, Pontotoc**, held "Sanctity of Human Life Sunday" on Jan. 18. The fellowship placed 332 crosses on the church lawn. A prayer circle was formed and W. H. Sims III, pastor, led in prayer.



**Goodyear Church, Picayune**, held note burning services on Feb. 1. The note indicating "paid in full" for the 10.166 acres of land outside Picayune city limits was purchased by Goodyear Church for relocation. The land was paid for in seven months. Pictured (from left) are Hilbert Miller, chairman of trustees, Warren Barnett; and George Strong.



Couples (pictured) of **Grace Memorial Church, Gulfport**, who have been married for 50 plus years were honored at a Valentine party at the home of Willie and Flo McCullough.

**Pleasant Hill Church, New Albany**, celebrated its 150th anniversary on Oct. 19. A brief history was prepared and shared by Barbara Teague. Randy Rinehart, former pastor, and Marvin Cox, director of missions, brought the messages. Lunch was served at the church. A prayer service opened the afternoon, then a plaque and certificate were presented from the Historical Commission. Harvey Sewell, former pastor, shared a message. The church has 640 members. Les Jones is the pastor.

**First Church, Pearl**, is now offering dual worship and dual Bible study at 9 a.m. and 10:30 a.m.

on "Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right." Weekly video presentations by Tim Kimmel started March 1 at 5 p.m. For more information call (228) 863-2482.

**Calvary Church, New Augusta**, will have its annual Luther K. Turner Memorial Day Service on March 15. Services will begin at 9:45 a.m. with Sunday School. Morning message will be brought by Roland D. Turner of Pascagoula. Dinner on the grounds will follow services. Others activities include singing at 1 p.m. until 4 p.m. Jason D. Turner is pastor.

**First Church, Richland**, will start two worship services and two Bible studies on March 1. The first Bible study and worship service will begin at 8:30 a.m. and the second at 10 a.m. The services are on Spirit 106 (105.9 FM) each Sunday at 8 a.m. Chuck Herring is pastor. For more information call (601) 939-1715.

**Bayou View Church, Gulfport**, will begin an eight week Discipleship Training class

**Phil Cross & Poet Voices** will be in concert at Wheeler Grove Church, Corinth, March 8 at 7 p.m. Kara Blackard is pastor.

## STAFF CHANGES

**First Church, Oxford**, called Jeff Holeman as minister of students/recreation effective Jan. 25. Holeman received his education at



Holeman

the University of Mississippi and New Orleans Seminary. He previously served as minister of youth and activities at First Church, Kosciusko.

**First Church, Calhoun City**, has called Amber Vaughn of Bruce as part time minister of youth effective Jan. 28. Vaughn is a student at the University of Mississippi.

## Revival dates

**Wayside, Vicksburg**: March 8-11; Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m.; Mon.-Wed., 7 p.m.; Randall Creel, Meridian, evangelist; Stephen Kight, Vicksburg, music; Larry Haggard, pastor.

## Baptistry sought for Ia. church

A Mississippi Baptist Brotherhood volunteer construction team is in need of a baptistry by May 1 to help complete a church the team is constructing in Glenwood, Iowa.

The team, led by Mackie Davis of Hattiesburg, will be installing the baptistry and the church steeple during their next trip to Glenwood on June 5-13.

The team will also conduct Vacation Bible Schools and participate in other evangelistic activities.

To provide information on

an available baptistry, contact the MBCB Brotherhood Department, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone: (601) 968-3800 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651.

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## NAMES IN THE NEWS



Lane Varner, staff evangelist at Davis Road Church, Metro Association, was licensed to the ministry on Dec. 28. Varner is available for revivals, evangelism conferences, and pulpit supply. He can be reached at (601) 373-1067 or Davis Road Church (601) 372-1485. Pictured (from left) are Ricky Summers, pastor; and Varner.



Calvary Church, Waynesboro, licensed Charlie Hardee to the gospel ministry on Feb. 22. Doug Broome, pastor, presented Hardee with a plaque. Hardee is a student at Jones County Junior College.

### MS Positions Available

**PART-TIME ASSOCIATE PASTOR/ SR. MINISTER OF MUSIC:** Paul Truitt Adult Minister: Send resume to Memorial Church (Rankin) is searching Search Committee, First Baptist for part-time Minister of Music. Send Church, PO Box 545, Aberdeen, MS resume to Search Committee, 3705 39730. Old Brandon Road, Pearl, MS 39208 or call (601) 939-2975.

**PUBLICATIONS SECRETARY:** needed for Jackson church. Computer knowledge required. Send resume to: Business Administrator 4240 Carter Circle, Jackson, MS 39209. Message.

**PIANIST** for small church approximately 20 miles from Jackson. Contact Ron Reeves at (601) 852-2276, leave message.

### CLASSIFIED ADS

RATE: 50 cents per word, \$5 minimum. Cash with order except on contract advertising. Include name, address, zip code, and phone number in word count. No blind ads. Only written ads accepted.

**SCOTLAND BAPTIST CHURCH,** Winona, MS, needs 15 passenger van. If you have one for sale, please call (601) 283-4425 or (601) 283-5407.

**R&B SOUND:** New and used sound and lighting equipment. Installation and repair. 1-800-840-4090.

**FLORIDA BAPTIST CHILDREN'S HOME** in Tallahassee, Florida, is looking for a Christian couple to work with children ages 6-18 years. The base salary for a house parent is \$14,635. Florida Baptist Children's Homes offers an excellent benefit package including retirement plan, medical/disability insurance, and paid vacations. Our campus is a beautiful 35-acre facility located at 8415 Buck Lake Road in Tallahassee. If you think you would be interested in a Christian ministry serving families and children please contact

Chris Kretschman at (904) 878-1458 in Tallahassee for more information.

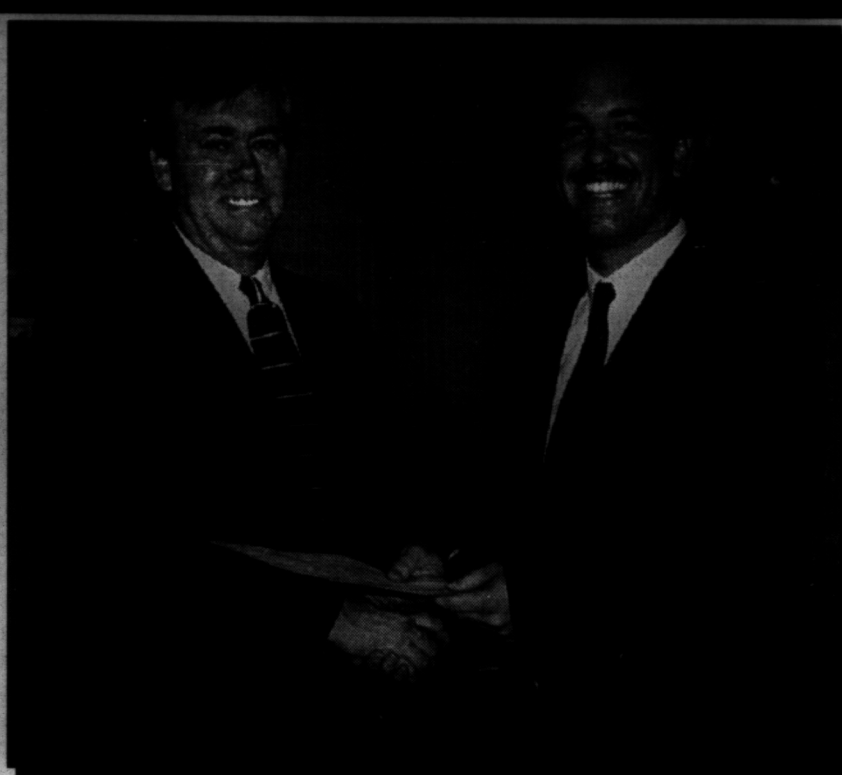
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Wayne Moak (right) was presented a Certificate of License on Nov. 2 by Bill Miller (left), pastor at Montgomery Church, Summit. Moak is currently enrolled at New Orleans Seminary Extension in Jackson. He is available for pulpit supply and can be reached at (601) 276-9512.

## BAPTIST COLLEGE NEWS

**Mississippi College (MC)** will present flutist Jean-Pierre Rampal in "Le Festival de Versailles," a concert in Swor Auditorium on April 17 at 7:30 p.m. Rampal has the impressive distinction of having established the flute as a sought after solo instrument. For a half-century, Rampal has been performing both classical and jazz compositions. MC is sponsoring Rampal in connection with the "Splendors of Versailles" exhibition. Tickets are \$35 and \$25 for reserved seating, and \$15 for unreserved seating. A pre-concert garden party will also be held during the evenings festivities. For

ticket information call Susie Jordan at (601) 925-7191.

**Mississippi College (MC)** and the Arts Council of Clinton are offering a free lecture series beginning in March. The "brown bag" lunch-time lectures will focus on the Palace of Versailles and the time of Louis the XIV and will culminate in a tour of the "Splendors of Versailles" exhibit in Jackson. The lectures will be held from 11:30 p.m. until 1 p.m. on March 3, 17, 24, and 31 in the Learning Resources Center of the MC library. The tour will be April 3 at 6 p.m. (leave Clinton at 5:15 p.m.) For the cost of the tour and additional information call Debbie Pierce at (601) 925-3323.

**Tom Stewart Lee Jr. and Bill Stark of Mississippi College (MC)** recently attended the 11th annual Higher Education Appreciation Day-Working for Academic Excellence (HEADWAE)

awards luncheon, held Feb. 17 in Jackson. Lee, a senior history major from Forest and Stark, a professor of biology, were selected from a pool of their peers to represent MC. HEADWAE was established in 1988 by legislative resolution to honor individual academic achievement and the overall contribution of the state's public and private institutions of higher learning.

**William Carey College Theatre** will present "Rumpelstiltskin," adapted by Michele Vacca from the Brothers Grimm classic, as its annual play especially for children. The production is co-sponsored by the Hattiesburg Arts Council. Performances in the O. L. Quave Theatre on the Hattiesburg campus are March 5 and 6 at 7 p.m., and March 7 at 10 a.m., 1:30 p.m., and 3:30 p.m. Tickets are \$3 each. The box office is open daily from 1-4 p.m. beginning March 2, and seats may be reserved by calling (601) 582-6221.

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## FAMILY BIBLE SERIES

### Helping people

Mark 1:21-27, 32-34, 40-45

By Grace Graham

Jesus seemed to attract people who needed help. People today are still seeking someone to take charge and provide needed help. One may even find those in need in our churches today as Jesus did in the synagogue.

**Helping with authority (vv. 21-27)** Jesus, unlike other teachers in the synagogue, neither quoted nor relied upon any names of rabbis for his teaching. He taught with a personal authority which exposed a man in strife. It is strange to imagine that a man with a demon worshiped in the synagogue with no problem until confronted by Jesus.

Most references to "demon possession" appear in the gospels and show an outburst of evil opposition to God's work in Christ. The idea of "demons" and "unclean spirits" means the same. Anything unclean separates man from God and from God's people.

The demon knew Jesus for whom he was called him the "Holy One of God." Jesus commanded the spirit to be silent. He would not accept a witness to himself as the Son of God when given by the powers of evil.

Jesus, with the same authority with which he taught, ordered the demon to "come out" of the man. The spirit left and the man



Graham

was whole because of his encounter with Jesus. Hearers of this event were truly amazed.

**Helping without discrimination (vv. 32-34)** As the Sabbath ended, many came to seek healing from Jesus. He healed to make all people whole. His fame was rapidly spreading.

Again, Jesus would not let the unclean spirits identify him to everyone. It is clear by Mark's writing that Jesus chose to reveal his identity with a step-by-step approach. He would not permit any spirit to publicly give more information than he was ready to reveal.

People seek to take their physical, emotional, and spiritual problems to someone who not only can help but is willing to help without hesitation. Are you a willing helper?

**Helping with compassion**

(vv.40-45). Some people today do not esteem themselves and feel rejected by society. One of the most despised people of Jesus' day was a person with leprosy.

Mark tells us that a leper came to Jesus and knelt before him to beg for healing. He had no doubt that Jesus was able to heal him. But was Jesus willing to touch and heal this "unclean" man?

Jesus was moved with compassion for this man. He declared that he was willing to touch him and heal him and so commanded. The man was immediately made clean.

"Compassion" is not only feeling and understanding one's sorrow and pain, but also grieving the condition of another to the point of taking action. Jesus did more than merely give this man his sympathy. He took action.

This same compassion for man's condition sent Jesus to the cross. Because he took action for unclean mankind, we

are made whole. This same compassion should so fill us, that it overflows to others who are broken and in need.

The only demand that Jesus made of the healed man was for silence. The man disobeyed. Any disobedience, even with the best motive, leads to harming the work of God. The news of this healing added to the excitement of the crowd.

The clean man was now able to go anywhere freely. But the one who healed him could no longer go into a town without being hampered by a crowd.

How difficult it is to love the unlovable! Are you willing to show the kind of concern for people that Jesus showed? With the strength and compassion of God, find and help a person this week that has a need to be touched by Jesus through you.

Graham is director of Childhood Education ministries at First Church, Gulfport.

## LIFE AND WORK

### Disciples: Pursuing things that have eternal significance

Luke 5:1-11, 27-32

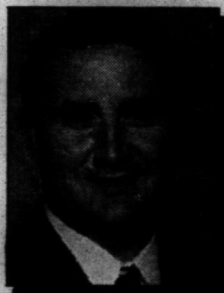
By Jim Burnett

Someone has said one of the best ways to put life into perspective is to imagine being present at your own funeral, listening to a delivered commentary on your life. What do you think would be said about you?

In our lesson today, Jesus encourages Peter and the other disciples to give their attention, energies, and talents to things that have eternal significance. Often in our world of great distractions, we, as God's people need the same encouragement.

**Follow Jesus' instructions (5:4-7).** Jesus was in the process of hand-picking his twelve disciples when he came across

Simon and some other fishermen. He requested the use of one of their boats. He needed a floating podium, for the crowds had swelled to such great numbers, prohibiting preaching from the shore. Being tired and exhausted from a whole night's fishing without a catch, Simon reluctantly paddled Jesus out a distance and stopped the boat. After Christ's message to the people, he made another request of Simon: "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch" (vs. 4). Although not seeing any benefit to such a practice, Simon accommodated the request. The next picture we see is the sight of fish jumping,



Burnett

nets ripping, and boats sinking. Are you ready to see some positive results in your life? Then, begin taking God at his word and doing what he says. You too will experience a windfall from God.

I'm reminded of a father who requested a difficult task of his daughter: to throw her cherished glass beads into the fire. Although she couldn't make sense of her daddy's request, trusting him, she eased off his lapped, rose to her feet, and tossed the beads into the flames. Sobbing, she ran back to his arms where he calmed her with kisses and hugs. The next day he handed her a beautiful pearl necklace to which she replied, "thank you daddy and I'm sorry I distrusted you."

**Focus on things of eternal significance (5:8-11).** Peter's eyes were now bulging and his heart pounding over this amazing sight. Falling to his knees, Peter begins confessing his sins

and begging Jesus to depart. The huge catch no longer seemed important. Peter's heart had been touched by the holiness of Christ and now belonged to the Lord. His attention was focused on eternal matters. Who does your heart belong to and where do your loyalties lie? What are your priorities, and do they have anything to do with God?

**Forsake distractions (5:27-28).** Levi was another man whom Christ enlisted and encouraged for Kingdom service. He was a tax collector who left all to follow Jesus. It seems without even looking back Levi abandoned a great paying job and perhaps an elaborate lifestyle to follow Christ. Why? Undoubtedly, Levi's job and lifestyle had not netted him the peace and purpose his heart desired. This, he knew, could be found only in Jesus and only after turning his back on those things that distracted him from following Jesus. What is it today keeping

you from following Christ and experiencing abundant life? Is it a job, hobby, family, religion or something else?

**Find ways to present Jesus (5:29-32).** Levi's fellowship of Christ was no secret. In fact, the first thing he did upon his conversion was host a banquet. He was saved and unashamed to admit it. He was also burdened for his lost friends. Too often we as Christians today forget the predicament of a lost person. Consequently, we surround ourselves with people who believe like us, dress like us, and even attend the same church as us. We must break up the "holy huddle" and move on a lost world with the message that Jesus saves. Ask God to provide you with opportunities to share your faith with unbelievers. Move out of your comfort zone and search out the lost. Invite them to supper. Invite them to church. Invite them to Christ.

Burnett is pastor of Raymond Road Church, Jackson.

## EXPLORE THE BIBLE

### Overcoming temptation

Luke 4:1-13

By Harold Simmons

When was the last time you were tempted to make bread from rocks or leap from high places without receiving so much as a bruise? Never? Is that because you realize that those are impossibilities for you? These temptations were very real for Jesus who had such tremendous powers. He faced the temptations full of the Holy Spirit.

**Directed into loneliness (4:1).** After Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, Jesus moved away from the baptismal site full of the Spirit and felt directed by the Holy Spirit to enter the very rugged and lonesome area called the wilderness. In this solitary

place, which was 35 miles by 15 miles of nothing, Jesus would have no distractions.

**Tempted to be a social Savior (4:2-4).** During this time before his public ministry, Jesus wrestled with how he would reach mankind. The devil made him very much aware of his physical condition of no food for the forty day period. The devil picked the very conditions where Jesus was most vulnerable at the time. "You know how hungry the poor people are in your world today. Make bread of stones for them to eat and they will follow you because you have the power to change their social condition," said the devil



Simmons

tempting Jesus. The scripture Jesus quoted in response (Deut. 8:3) points out that giving man bread (material necessities) is not the answer to social problems. That would be treating a symptom rather than the disease. Jesus wanted to change mankind and the "changed society" — the kingdom of God — would follow.

**Tempted to take a shortcut (4:5-8).** The devil tried another way to deter Jesus from the real mission that his father had given to him. The devil might have said, "Ok, ok, so you want a kingdom. I can get you all the kingdoms of the world and all you have to do to possess them is to worship me." Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 6:13 in response to this ploy of the devil. In effect, Jesus replied he would take no shortcuts, particularly shortcuts

that involved lowering of standards. Instead of worshipping the Most High God, he would be worshipping a lesser being who was not worthy of worship. A lowering of standards would move toward making things gray instead of clear cut black and white. G. K. Chesterton said that the world has a tendency to see things in "indeterminate gray" and it is the duty of Christians to clearly see right and wrong.

**Tempted to be a headliner (4:9-12).** The devil changed his method a bit and took Jesus to the highest point of the Temple for his next try. The highest point was where the Royal Porch and Solomon's Porch met. From that vantage point it was 450 feet to the Kidron Valley floor. This time the devil made his pitch and quoted scripture to back it up. He tried to disguise this lie to look like a "legal" method to win men. "Grab the headlines, that's the way to reach people.

Jump from here and people will see you falling and the angels catching you. They will give you headlines from the greatest communications device — the human mouth." Jesus could have used his own words to say the devil had quoted scripture out of context. Instead he quoted Deuteronomy 6:16 in which God reminded the people that they had tried to take things into their own hands and had not trusted God's leadership and timing. Using sensationalism to win men is not the method that God had chosen from the beginning of time.

**Winning one battle (4:13).** An old saying goes, "It ain't over 'til it's over." Jesus had won one battle and would fight more before the cross and the resurrection.

Bottom line: Jesus demonstrated how to overcome temptations with God's help.

Simmons is pastor of Hebron Church, Grenada.



# THE VILLAGE VIEW

## The Baptist Children's Village



Ronny E. Robinson, Executive Director  
P.O. Box 27  
Clinton, MS 39060-0027  
(601) 922-2242

ACCREDITED



### Gifts of Honor and Memory

A portion of The Village View is allocated each month to a list of Gifts of Honor and Memory. Many groups and individuals elect to pay tribute to others through this sensitive, meaningful and helpful medium. This feature is hopefully designed to further honor, with taste and respect, those who are and have been special to our special friends.

DEC. 1, 1997-  
DEC. 31, 1997

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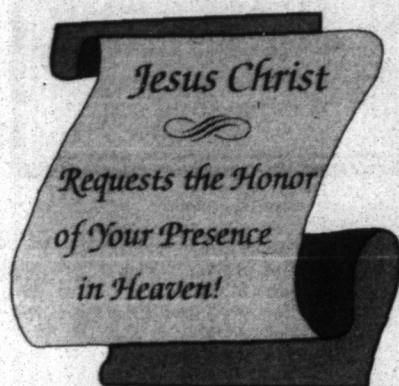
### CENTENNIAL CHALLENGE HONOREES

Center Ridge Baptist Church, Yazoo City,  
Sebastopol Baptist Church, and Heucks Retreat Baptist  
Church did meet the Centennial Challenge to support  
The Baptist Children's Village  
for a full day but were left off the list of centennial donors.



Recently, some of the female residents and child care workers from the India Nunery campus of The Baptist Children's Village visited Pleasant Hills Nursing Home in Jackson. Pictured are (left to right) Mackie Parker, Child Care Worker, and BCV residents Angel and Mia enjoy visiting with these ladies from Pleasant Hills.





#### YOU CAN RESPOND RIGHT NOW!

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you.  
(I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death.  
(I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you.  
(I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life. From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with him.  
(I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name (John 1:12).

If you make a decision for Jesus Christ today, contact a local Baptist church for spiritual guidance.

### Bibliocipher

By Charles Marx  
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CLH PLX WL MLTZX EJZ  
DLHMX, EJUE JZ PUTZ  
JNW LAMO YZPLEEZA  
WLA, EJUE DJLWLZTZH  
YZMNZTZEJ NA JNI  
WJLSMX ALE RZHNWJ, YSE  
JUTZ ZTZH MUWENAP  
MNCZ.

BLJA EHZZ: WNKEZZA

Clue: C = F

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark One Eleven.

# Richmond center offering beacon of hope

RICHMOND, Va. — To the north, across the river, downtown Richmond rises like a promise: proud of its past, hopeful of the future. Here, on the southside of the city, that promise scarcely casts a shadow. Hillside Court, an aptly

American Missions, March 1-8. The Week of Prayer is part of the Season of North American Missions. The Season also includes the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering with a national goal for 1998 of \$42 million. "These are good people,"

the latest school board referendum. Upstairs, university students tutor children and work with them on their homework.

Hillside Court has 402 public housing apartments. About 1,300 people live in them legally, another 1,000 illegally. "Those are cousins living with cousins and boyfriends living with women; that's public housing," says Carter. On the hill above are private homes, mostly elderly and a few Caucasians who did not leave with the white-flight of 30 years ago, bringing the resident total to 4,000.

They are all part of the community in which Hillside Baptist Center seeks to minister.

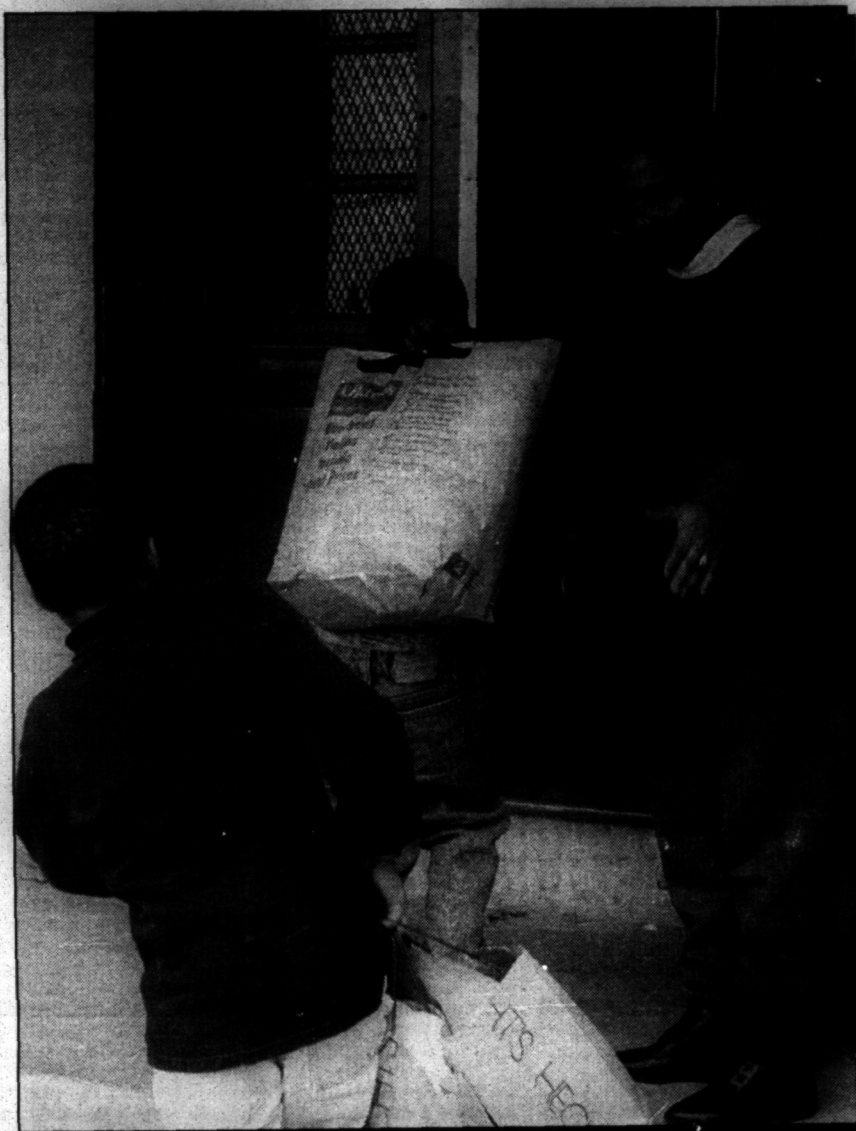
Yet despite the numbers, despite all the activity — after school programs, tutoring, the adult ceramics classes, women's support group, food pantry, clothes closet, special programs in summer and at Christmas — success is measured in small terms. In the nine years Carter has been here, she has come to terms with that, and rejoices in the ones who accept Christ and find the hope that changes lives.

Like the muscular young man who this year started college and comes back each week to tutor

others. ("He's one of ours, you know. He grew up here.") Or the mother who threw off her addiction, is working and struggling to set a new example for her daughter. ("Give yourself a pat on the back! See how far you have come!")

Late in the afternoon a young woman approaches Carter on the street. She looks little more than a child herself, perhaps in high school. Little by little her story eases out. She is 21. She has two children. She is pregnant with a third. She has no money. No food. No husband.

"Stop by the center later," says Carter. "Let's see what we can do."



**GIFT OF HOPE** — Valerie Carter, director of the Hillside Baptist Center in Richmond, Va., helps children unload gifts for a Christmas store. For a small fee the store, sponsored by the Richmond Association WMU, allows parents select toys for their children from items donated by area churches. Another Christmas store is set up in which children can select gifts for their parents. (Photo by Bill Bangham)

named pocket of poverty, a forgotten corner of Virginia's capitol city, nestles against the ridge that inspired its name. Worn lawns, overhung with oaks, connect regimented rows of red brick buildings, reminders of a time when the working poor gathered here, saved their cash and moved on in a grab for a piece of the American dream. Before such places became projects, places of permanent despair.

Now it is different. Few move on. And despair has long since settled in to stay.

There have been two shootings, in as many weeks. Last week a teenager died of meningitis. Single-parent families — mothers with children, children who do not know who their fathers are — are the norm. Drugs are a major concern and the streets have been privatized in an effort to combat trafficking.

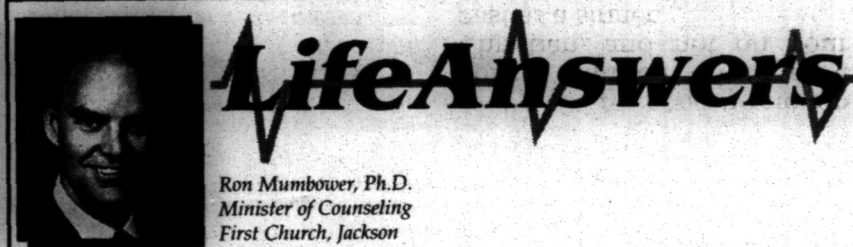
Missionary Valerie Carter pauses by a bullet-riddled car, its glass shattered in the latest drive-by shooting. She and her husband, Hylan, are among the featured missionaries during the Week of Prayer for North

says Carter. "There is just precious little hope here. Hope is a commodity that has to be looked for day-by-day."

Carter is often the one person in the community people turn to when they are seeking that hope. She offers it in funeral services for the ones who were slain, and the little girl who died too soon. In bags of food for hungry families. In a coat for a child in winter. In the reassuring voice of one who knows things can be worked out.

Hillside Baptist Center, where Carter is director, stands like a beacon on the ridge above the community. Part and parcel with Shalom Baptist Church — where her husband, Hylan, is pastor — it is well-worn and somewhat shoddy, in a comfortable way.

Children race the halls, slamming doors, footfalls echoing the corridors. In the yard, others shout, scream with delight, playing with a puppy. Women wander in to chat, gather food from the pantry, clothing from the closet, slather peanut butter on bread for after-school snacks and argue



*I'm slipping back into sinful behavior I had before I was saved. I'm happy as a Christian, so why can't I stop this foolishness?*

Focus on your joy as a Christian, rather than happiness. There is a difference. Happiness comes and goes depending on circumstances, but "... the joy of the Lord is your strength." (Ne. 8:10). You are slipping back into sinful behavior as a pre-conditioned response to difficulties in your life. When a person is hurting, past sinful behavior can bring momentary pleasure ("happiness") and provide escape. Becoming a Christian does not automatically take away these desires and pre-conditioned responses. Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." (John 16:33 NIV) What better place can be found to focus your joy than on Christ himself? Spend your time praying, studying the life of Jesus, and learning Scripture. Remove yourself from familiar surroundings that remind you of sinful conduct. Be accountable to Christian friends who can help magnify your newfound joy in Christ. Memorize Phil.

4:8-9. Lastly, concentrate on your unlimited future as a Christian, and not on your past as a sinner.

*How can I tell my young grandchildren that I am going to die in the near future? I want to approach this in a meaningful way.*

You are on the right path, in that they know you love them unconditionally. Spend time with them, describing your life adventures and passing on lessons you have learned. They will not soon forget this quality time. Start a journal or write letters that recount your life and the importance of your walk with the Lord. You can also make audio and video tapes. Sing to them the old familiar hymns that speak of the joy of heaven, then explain how wonderful heaven will be for all the children of the King. You can teach them a lifelong lesson if you model that Christians are not afraid of death. Search for age-appropriate books on this subject at your local Baptist Book Store. Be in prayer about this important task you are undertaking. What a blessing to have a grandmother like you!

Send your counseling questions to LifeAnswers c/o The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Please be brief. Name is not required. Remember: in time of crisis, your pastor can make recommendations on your counseling needs.